

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /091 W
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R 041630Z JUL 74

FM AMCONGEN PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 007

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

UNCLAS PORT MORESBY 015

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: CRISIS OVER CONSTITUTION

THE SITUATION REGARDING THE CONSTITUTION CONTINUES FLUID. NO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOMARE AND PANGU PRESIDENT MOI AVEI APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN SMOOTHED OVER, BUT SOMARE'S PROBLEMS WITH MOMIS AND KAEPUTIN SEEM TO BE INCREASING. THREE PANGU MEMBERS OF CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE (INCLUDING FATHER MOMIS) WERE REPORTEDLY ORDERED OUT OF A JOINT MEETING OF PANGU AND NATIONAL PARTIES BY SOMARE AND KIKI ON JULY 3.

MOMIS APPEARED ON A RADIO PROGRAM ON THE EVENING OF JULY 3 IN WHICH HE ACCUSED SOMARE OF /BACK ROOM DEALING/ AND OF EFFORTS TO SABATAGE. THE WORK OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE. MOMIS ALSO CRITICIZED THE CHIEF MINISTER FOR HIS RELIANCE ON WHITE ADVISORS.

SOMARE TOOK HIS GLOVES OFF IN RESPONDING IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ON JULY 4 IN WHICH HE REPORTEDLY ACCUSED MOMIS OF DISHONESTY SAYING HIS ACTIONS WERE UNBECOMING TO A MAN OF RELIGION.

KAEPUTIN MOVED IN TO CHALLENGE THE MORAL POSITION OF SOMARE'S AND GUISE'S MINORITY REPORT ON THE CONSTITUTION
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SAYING THAT THOUSANDS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEANS HAD MADE THEIR VIEWS

KNOWN TO THE CPC WHOSE REPORT WAS TRULY REFLECTIVE OF THE PEOPLE WHEREAS THE MINORITY REPORT WAS HASTILY DRAFTED AND REFLECTED THE VIEWS OF ONLY SOMARE AND GUISE. SOMARE'S REACTION AT THIS MORNING'S PRESS CONFERENCE REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST KAEPUTIN IN THE CABINET.

OBVIOUSLY A CONFRONTATION HAS DEVELOPED. SOME SEASONED OBSERVERS ARE SUGGESTING THAT THE MELANESIAN ERA IN PNG POLITICS IS ENDING AND A NEW, TOUGHER, LESS COMPROMISING ERA IS BEGINNING. MOMIS IS AT A DISTINCT DEBATING DIS-ADVANTAGE IN PROMOTING HIS DRAFT CONSTITUTION BECAUSE IT IS SO LONG AND COMPLICATED THAT IT DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO DEBATE, NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, TO READY UNDERSTANDING. THE CURRENT BETS ARE STILL ON SOMARE.

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